DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 172 FL 012 023

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TITLE A Synchronic View of English Bilingualism in India.
INSTITUTION Central Inst. of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderbad (India).
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 13p.: May not reproduce clearly.
JOURNAL CIT CIEFL Bulletin: v15 n1 p65-76 1979

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingualism; Diglossia; Elementary Secondary Education; *English; Government (Administrative Body); Higher Education; *Indians; *Language Planning; Language Usage; Mass Media; *Official Languages; Publications; Sociolinguistics
IDENTIFIERS *India

ABSTRACT

While English was supported as an official language in India during her pre-independence days, it was during the post-independence days that English bilingualism became widespread. The influence of English can be seen in higher education, elementary and secondary education, national institutions, in the press, and in broadcasting, publishing, and administration. As the number of universities in India increased, so did the number of students of English. Next to Hindi, English has the highest position among language courses at the postgraduate level. In 1974, there were 17 million Indian elementary and secondary school students studying English. English is the only medium of teaching at national institutions, including those providing military training. The number of English newspapers published throughout India is 2,765, second only to Hindi in number. All government-controlled radio stations broadcast in English along with other regional languages. India ranks third, after the United States and Britain, in English publications. English is the associate official language of the union of India as well as of separate Indian states. It is used freely in social circles in India. By Ferguson's standards, then, it is a major language of India. English is in a diglossic situation with the other mother tongues, having specific functions and thus, needs to be learned by the Indian people. (PJM)

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ED195172
FL012023

CIEFL Bulletin
XV, No. 1, 1979 (65-76)

A Synchronic View of English Bilingualism in India

S. V. Parasher

The English language in India is a legacy of the British rule. We must, however, note that it was not only Macaulay who was responsible for the introduction of English into Indian education, but also several prominent Indians led by Raja Rammohan Roy who wanted English education for the country's scientific and material progress. Macaulay's Minute, passed after a great controversy between the Anglicists and Orientalists, aimed at creating "a class of interpreters between us and the millions we govern" (Sharp 1920: 116). The British rulers encouraged and supported the spread of English during the pre-independence days. Nevertheless, it was during the post-independence era that English bilingualism became more widespread in India.

English in Higher Education

An important factor in the diffusion of English bilingualism in India is the unprecedented expansion of education during the post-independence era. As Table 1 shows, the number of universities rose from 20 in 1947 to 121 in 1976 and student enrolment in institutions of higher education from 2,56,000 in 1946–47 to 34,00,000 in 1975-76.

Table 1: Institutions of Higher Learning and Student Enrolment (1891-92 to 1975-76)

Year (1)	*No. of universities* (2)	*No. of Arts, Science, Commerce colleges* (3)	*No. of students enrolled* (4)
1891-92	5	—	12,985
1901-02	5	—	17,651
1911-12	5	—	29,648
1921-22	14	—	45,175
1931-32	16	—	79,139
1946-47	20	—	2,56,000

Table 1 *(continued)*

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1949-50	27	488	3,83,000
1958-59	40	913	9,57,000
1960-61	46	1,081	10,98,000
1965-66	68	1,769	17,28,773
1971-72	86	2,798	28,58,077
1975-76	121	3,582	34,00,000*

*This includes enrolment in technical institutions also.

(NCERT 1965, UGC 1976, and Times of India 1978)

Since English continues to dominate higher education in India, the greater the enrolment in universities, the larger the spread of English bilingualism in the country. This fact is borne out by the following information collected from the *Universities Handbook* (Association of Indian Universities 1977) :

i) Out of the 78 universities offering undergraduate courses in Arts, 58 (74.35%) have English as a medium of teaching while 8 others give the option of writing examination answers in English.

ii) Eleven universities have only English as the medium of instruction even at the undergraduate Arts level.

iii) Out of 78 universities offering postgraduate courses in Arts, 66 (84.5%) provide for instruction and examination through the medium of English. In 36 universities English is the only medium of teaching and examining.

iv) Out of 78 universities and Institutes of Science and / or Technology offering postgraduate courses in science, 74 (about 95%) provide for teaching and examining through the medium of English. In 57 (73%) universities English is the only medium of teaching and examining for courses leading to the degree of Master of Science.

v) English continues to be the sole medium of instruction and examination in all the university faculties of engineering, technology, medicine, in all the Indian Institutes of Technology and in almost all national institutes of higher learning and/or research.

vi) There is no university in India where English language and/or literature courses are not offered at the undergraduate level.

vii) There is hardly any university in India which does not provide for the teaching of English at the M.A. level.

Moreover, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of students enrolling themselves for the degree of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in English at Indian universities as shown by the figures for 10 years from 1961-62 to 1971-72 (Table 2).

Table 2: Postgraduate Enrolment in English at Indian Universities : (1961-62 to 1971-72)

Year	*M.A.*	*Ph.D.*
1961-62	5,192	146
1962-63	5,785	145
1963-64	6,075	146
1964-65	6,372	162
1965-66	7,180	186
1966-67	8,403	237
1967-68	9,690	388
1968-69	9,769	403
1969-70	9,875	401
1970-71	10,904	411
1971-72	11,404	453

(UGC 1976 : 529-30)

Table 3: Position of Language Courses at the Postgraduate Level

Language	*No. of students who took the M.A. examination in 1975*[1]
Hindi	9,350
English	8,211
Marathi	1,472
Urdu	1,158
Tamil	842
Telugu	580
Gujarati	568
Kannada	564
Punjabi	549
Bengali	393
Assamese	244
Malayalam	243
Oriya	188

(Association of Indian Universities 1977)

(1) Figures for the universities of Bhopal, Burdwan, Jabalpur, Kalyani and Patna pertain to 1973. No figures are available for the universities of Aligarh, Avadh, Bhagalpur, Calcutta, Cochin, Ravindra Bharati and Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi).

This increase in numbers is particularly significant in the background of anti-English demonstrations during the 1960's in certain parts of the country. Even now English continues to be a popular subject at the post-graduate level. The number of students who take the M. A. examination in English is usually quite high. Consider the figures for 1975 given in Table 3.

English in School Education

During the post-independence period the number of schools and the enrolment of students have gone up. Table 4 presents some data on the pupil enrolment in Indian schools since the 1950's to the present day.

Table 4 : Pupil Enrolment in Indian Schools : 1950-51 to 1978-79

Year	*Enrolment in millions*		
	Age group 6 to 11 (Classes I to V)	*Age group 11 to 14 (Classes VI to VIII)*	*Age group 14 to 17 (Classes IX to XI)*
1950-51	19.2	3.1	1.25
1955-56	25.1	4.3	1.98
1960-61	35.0	6.7	3.03
1965-66	50.5	10.5	5.27
1968-69	53.9	12.1	6.47
1975-76	61.7	15.9	8.80
1978-79 (estimated)	88.0	35.1	13.70

(Government of India 1972 and Times of India 1978)

According to Gage and Ohanessian (1974), there were more than 17 million students taking ESOL courses in Indian schools in 1973. If we add the number of college and university students to this figure, there must have been 20 million students studying English in India. At the present rate of increase in enrolments the number of students studying English in schools and universities in India in the year 1979 must be over 25 million.

English is both the medium of instruction and examination and a subject of study in Indian schools. A recent survey revealed that "the number of the States and Union Territories where English is the medium of instruction is greater than the number of States and Union Territories where Hindi is the medium" (Chaturvedi and Mohale 1976 : 45). In fact, English is available as the major medium in Andaman and Nicobar, Arunachal, Goa, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

In recent years, owing to great public demand, several new English-medium schools have been established in the urban and semi-urban areas. There is always a great rush for admission to English-medium schools. In addition, there are several English-medium public schools, mostly residential, patronized mainly by the elite and the more affluent sections of the society. Although both Hindi and English are available as media of instruction in the government-run Central Schools and Sainik Schools, a large majority of children admitted to these schools opt for English.

According to Chaturvedi and Mohale (1976), English is taught as first language in 13 states and 9 union territories for 10 to 13 years, as second language in 16 states and 5 union territories for 5 to 10 years, as third language in 8 states and 4 union territories for 5 to 8 years and as optional language in 4 states and 1 union territory for 2 to 6 years. The class time allotted to the teaching of English varies from 15 hours a week for classes IX, X and XI in Jammu and Kashmir to 6 to 8 hours a week for classes VIII to XII in Maharashtra. In most states, the teaching of English begins at classes V or VI, except in Manipur, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, West Bengal, Goa, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry where it begins at classs III and in Arunachal and Nagaland where it is taught from class I.

English in National Institutions

Outside schools and universities, English is the only medium of teaching and learning at national institutions providing in-service and pre-service training, for example, military academies, several institutes under the Indian Council of Medical Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, National Council of Educational Research and Training, several staff training institutions run by the Government of India, industry, big business, banks, railways, airlines, finance corporations and so on. English continues to be the only medium of national seminars, symposia and academic discusssions. Until recently, English alone has been the medium of competitive examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission and the State Service Commissions. All competitive examinations conducted by business and industry have only English as the medium of examination and interview. The proceedings of the Supreme Court and High Courts are recorded in English under a constitutional provision (Article 348).

English Press

An important factor in the diffusion of English bilingualism in India is the English press. The English press in India is by far the best established and most influential. According to a recent Government of India source, the number of English newspapers (dailies, weeklies, etc.) published throughout the country is 2,765. This number is next only to Hindi newspapers and

higher than those published in any other Indian language. In terms of circulation English newspapers lead all other Indian languages including Hindi (Table 5).

Table 5: Language-wise Distribution and Circulation of Newspapers including Dailies, Weeklies, etc., Published in India in 1976

Language	*Number of newspapers*	*Circulation*
English	2,765	78,28,000
Hindi	3,289	77,38,000
Assamese	49	1,24,000
Bengali	855	18,97,000
Gujarati	580	21,99,000
Kannada	392	12,28,000
Kashmiri	1	—
Malayalam	539	26,22,000
Marathi	806	21,31,000
Oriya	138	2,12,000
Punjabi	278	5,72,000
Sanskrit	23	12,000
Sindhi	58	61,000
Tamil	618	33,13,000
Telugu	441	13,34,000
Urdu	975	14,93,000
Bilingual	1,087	9,88,000
Multilingual	264	1,99,000
Others	162	1,24,000

(Government of India 1978)

In 1976, there were 23 leading dailies, published in 8 languages, which had a circulation of over 1,00,000 copies each. Among these English dailies had the largest circulation (Table 6). In terms of geographical distribution, English dailies are published from all the states and union territories of India except Arunachal Pradesh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Moreover, the English press is supposed to be wider in news coverage and more cosmopolitan in views than its Indian language counterparts. The regional language press is marked by its regional coverage and downgrading of international and national news items. The English language paper tries to argue on national or cosmopolitan grounds and reaches a wider audience.

Table 6 : Language-wise Distribution of Dailies with Circulation above 1,00,000 copies

Language	*Titles of newspapers*	*Total circulation*
English	Times of India (Bombay and Delhi), Hindustan Times, Hindu, Statesman, Tribune, Amrit Bazar Patrika	10,56,096
Malayalam	Malayala Manorama (Kottayam and Calicut), Mathrubhumi (Cochin and Calicut), Kerala Kaumudi	7,01,040
Bengali	Anand Bazar Patrika, Jugantar	4,79,372
Hindi	Nav Bharat Times, Hindustan	3,85.145
Gujarati	Bombay Samachar, Gujarat Samachar, Sandesh	3,42,131
Marathi	Loksatta, Maharashtra Times	2,97,932
Kannada	Prajavani	1,07,791
Tamil	Dinamani	1,02,779

(Government of India 1978).

English in Broadcasting

The use of English in broadcasting is quite liberal. The government-controlled All-India Radio in New Delhi and its 82 stations in different parts of the country broadcast in English along with the regional languages. All the important news bulletins broadcast from Delhi and relayed from several AIR stations are in both Hindi and English. The AIR broadcasts commentaries, features, talks, discussions, interviews, educational programmes in English from its various stations. Even western music has a place in the AIR broadcasts. The AIR plays an important role in teaching English in the country. According to a recent CIEFL brochure, 23 AIR stations broadcast its English lessons for schools every week day, each lesson being of 20 minutes' duration.

Publication of Books in English

Books play an important role in national communication. The figures of book production should, therefore, be very significant in showing which language enjoys prestige in the country. India is one of the leading countries in publishing books in English. As Israel (1978 : 59) observes "in terms of number of titles published annually India stands third, after the United States and Britain." About 43 per cent of total books produced in our

country are in English. A comparison of the figures of book production for the past few years indicates that the number of books published in English is not only higher than Hindi, but also almost equal to all the other major Indian languages put together (Table 7).

Table 7 : Book Production in English and Other Major Indian Languages (1969-1976)

Year	*(Number of titles)*				
	English	*Hindi*	*Other major languages*[1]	*Sanskrit*	*Percentage of English books*
1969	4,842	2,723	6,051	104	35.26
1970	4,666	2,641	6,758	60	33.04
1971	5,429	1,871	6,214	92	39.92
1972	5,723	2,794	5,914	75	39.60
1973	6,183	1,814	5,978	54	44.75
1974	5,501	1,158	4,677	40	47.52
1975	4,700	1,697	6,188	52	37.20
1976	6,733	2,235	6,696	93	42.82

(1)These languages are : Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

(UNESCO 1975 and Israel 1978)

As regards the production of professional journals, English is the most dominant language. According to a Government of India (1975) source, in 1972 there were 136 journals devoted to science out of which 103 (75%) were published in English. There were very few periodicals in any other Indian language : Hindi 6, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada and Punjabi 3 each, Marathi 2 and Tamil 1. In the field of engineering and technology, out of a total of 205 journals published in India, 172 (84%) were in English. Most of the journals devoted to humanities and social science were also in English.

English in Administration

In addition to being 'the associate official language' of the Union of India, English is the sole official language of Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Daman and Diu, Mizoram and Pondicherry. In other states and union territories English continues to be used very liberally at various levels in government. An analysis of different languages used in the Lok Sabha (published by Centre

for Applied Linguistics 1966) revealed that 83.2 per cent of the entire proceedings during one particular year were conducted in English. *Press in India 1973* shows that out of a total of 244 periodicals published by the Government of India, 146 (about 60%) were in English and the remaining 98 were in various regional languages, including Hindi (Government of India 1975). Out of 2,662 telegrams issued by the Ministry of Education to the State Governments and subordinate offices during the three-month period ending 28 February 1975, only 20 were in Hindi and the rest in English (Mehrotra 1977).

English in Social Circles

Moreover, English is used very freely in Indian social circles as a means of communication at several formal and informal levels. Educated Indians usually write their business and personal letters in English, talk to colleagues and friends in English, read newspapers, magazines and books in English and enjoy English movies. In short, the English language and westernised life style form an inseparable part of the educated Indian's way of living. What is more, a good command of English is considered to be a mark of education, sophistication and rated high on the prestige scale.

Creative Writing in English

Another important use of English in India is in creative writing. A sizable body of distinctly Indian literature, including poetry, is produced in English. In fact, creative writing in no other language than English, Hindi and Sanskrit has a pan-Indian reading public. Therefore, Iyengar (1962:3) observes: "Indian writing in English is but one of the voices in which India speaks. It is a new voice, no doubt, but it is as much Indian as others." Several Indian writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Khushwant Singh, Raja Rao and Kamala Das, to name just a few, are producing creative literature. All these writers are aware of the fact that they are writing in a medium that is their own. For example, Kamala Das proclaims that

> The language I speak
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
> It is as human as I am human, don't
> You see?
>
> (An Introduction, a poem in *Summer in Calcutta)*

Indian writing in English is recognized as an academic discipline and forms part of postgraduate courses in English at several Indian universities.

English : A Major Language of India

As the foregoing discussion makes it clear, English is deeply rooted in India. According to a preliminary analysis of the 1971 census returns, English is one of those 82 mother tongues which claim more than 1,00,000 speakers. In addition to about 2,00,000 people who speak English as their mother tongue, there must be over 25 million people in India who have learnt some amount of English as a second language. As Ferguson (1964) suggests, a language can be considered a major language of a given country if it fulfils any *one* or more of the following conditions :

(i) it is spoken as a native language by 25 per cent of the population or by 1 million people ;

(ii) it is an official language of the nation ;

(iii) it is the language of education of over 50% of the secondary school graduates of the nation.

English, which is the associate official language of the Union of India, fulfils criterion (ii) straightaway. In addition, it partially fulfils criteria (i) and (iii): it is used for certain specific purposes by millions of people, though not as their first language, but as a second language and it is the medium of secondary education in thousands of schools all over India. English, therefore, *is* one of the major languages of India.

Functions of English in India

It is an established sociolinguistic fact that nobody learns a second language unless there is a need. That is to say, when millions of people are learning English in this country there must be some need to learn it. In fact, the need to learn a second language arises when a group of people desire to fulfil certain societal functions or roles for which the norm is that language. The fact that English has co-existed with several Indian languages for about two centuries is enough evidence to show that there are still certain societal functions which demand the use of English. English has not succeeded in replacing or driving out any of the indigenous languages in India as it did in the USA or Canada or Australia. This also indicates that English bilingualism in India is of a stable nature. To use Haugen's (1972) terminology, it is neither 'replacive' nor 'supplementary', but it is 'complementary', i.e., English has a complementary function along with the speaker's first language. It exists in cooperation with the individual bilingual's native language and not in competition with it.

The Indian bilingual situation poses a challenge to the sociolinguist. Several empirical studies of the bilinguals' use of languages will have to be

undertaken before we can discuss the roles and functions of English and Indian languages in India. My investigation into the English-educated bilinguals' language use (Parasher, forthcoming a & b) has revealed that the mother tongue and English have socially defined functions. Certain domains of language use, such as the family, tend to be associated with the mother tongue. In the domains of education, government and employment English continues to be the dominant language. Although these preliminary results are revealing, more research will have to be done to define the functions of English vis-a-vis other Indian languages. The findings of such investigations will have direct relevance to language planning and language teaching in India.

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